

CRACK GANG INVADES FLAT , SETS UP SHOP

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A Detroit woman and her three children were held captive at gunpoint early Friday by a drug **gang** that broke into their home and installed an iron gate over the doorway to sell **crack** cocaine through the bars, police said.

A 21-year-old man who police said was the leader of the **gang** and two youths, ages 16 and 14, were arrested at the home after the woman, Wendy Howard, escaped with her children through a back way.

The two juveniles appeared Friday before Wayne County Juvenile Court Referee Carl Hall and were ordered held in lieu of \$50,000 bonds each pending a pre-trial hearing Wednesday on charges of burglary and kidnapping. The adult is scheduled to be arraigned today in 36th District Court.

"He didn't care about my kids," Howard said of the alleged **gang** leader. "He said he needed a new spot because all his other spots were getting busted."

Howard, 26, said her trouble had been brewing for several weeks since she turned down an offer of \$125 a week from the adult, who she knew as a neighborhood drug figure, but only by the name "Nanny," to use her **flat** as a **crack** house. She lives in a two-story, four-unit building in the 1500 block of Garland, off Jefferson Avenue near Waterworks Park.

"First time he offered me \$125, then he went to \$150, then he said \$200 a week," said Howard, an unemployed, single parent who relies on state aid to support her three children, ages three years, one year and two months.

"I told him 'No, no, no. I got kids **up** in here.'

"He said, 'I'm fixing to roll some 'caine out of your house, and if you don't like it, I'll kill you and all your kids,' " Howard said.

Howard said the **gang** used to deal from another house in the neighborhood that recently burned down.

She said the **gang** kicked her door open -- "it came **up** right off the hinges" -- about 1:30 a.m. Friday as she was watching "The Untouchables" on television and her children slept.

The **gang** leader "put the gun in my face and said, 'I'll kill you and everybody in the house,' " she said.

She said the others brought the black, accordion-style gate to her upper **flat** from a van and nailed it **up** in the doorway. The gate was still attached Friday afternoon.

After a short time, Howard said the men locked her into the apartment and left, apparently to get drugs. She said she was ordered to wait, but collected her children and some diapers and slipped out down a back stairwell.

Howard said she ran across the street to her mother's house and waited until the **gang** members returned about 30 minutes later and began selling drugs before she called police.

Howard said **crack** cocaine has damaged her neighborhood. "It's bad business," she said. "I know everybody around here and everybody knows I'm not involved in this.

"I believe they did it because I got kids and they figured if I have kids I'm going to let them do it," she said.

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